

# The Venus Flytrap



A fly looking for its next meal notices a sweet-smelling plant with big leaves shaped like clamshells. It's the perfect place for the fly to stop and drink some sweet nectar. Or is it? The fly lands on one of the leaves, and suddenly it's trapped! The leaves snap shut in less than half a second. Instead of getting a meal, the fly has become a meal for the Venus flytrap.

The Venus flytrap is a carnivorous plant, which means it eats living things. A carnivorous plant must attract, capture, kill, and digest its own food. Even so, the Venus flytrap plant has no brain, and no muscles for moving, chewing, or swallowing. So how can it move rapidly enough to gobble up insects and bugs?

The leaves of a Venus flytrap have tiny hairs that act like motion detectors. When an insect touches the hairs, it triggers the leaves to quickly snap shut, trapping and killing the insect. The leaves act as both a mouth and a stomach. They squeeze the insect tightly, and slowly the plant digests all the nutrients. About a week later, the leaves reopen and the skeleton of the insect falls out. The Venus flytrap gets ready for its next meal!

**Number the steps in the correct order.  
Then answer the question at the bottom.**

- The insect touches tiny hairs that act as motion detectors.
- The leaves reopen and the insect's skeleton falls out.
- An insect lands on the leaves to drink the sweet nectar.
- The leaves squeeze together tightly and bring nutrients to the plant.
- The insect is trapped inside and dies.
- The hairs trigger the leaves to snap shut in less than half a second.

What is a carnivorous plant? \_\_\_\_\_

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